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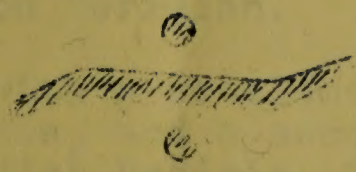

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METIS REHABILITATION

"For the Betterment of the Metis Population of Alberta"

PREAMBLE: The purpose of Metis Rehabilitation is to assist the Metis people of Alberta to become established in permanent homes on lands allotted to them so that they may be encouraged to provide for themselves an adequate living. The objective is that they should more fully enjoy the privileges to which they are entitled, and more competently assume the responsibilities of Canadian citizens.

AUTHORITY: The Metis Rehabilitation program is authorized by "The Metis Population Betterment Act, 1940" which is administered by the Minister of Public Welfare.

DEFINITION: In the Act "Metis" means "a person of mixed white and Indian blood having not less than one-quarter Indian blood, but does not include an Indian or a non-treaty Indian as defined by the Indian Act (Revised Statutes of Canada, 1927)."

ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible to become a member of a Settlement Association, a Metis must be of the full age of 18 years, and have lived in Alberta at least five years.

SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION: A Settlement Association includes the Metis who live on one of the six areas in Northern Alberta that have been set aside for them.

AREAS: No. 1, Keg River, centred at Paddle Prairie, 140 miles North of Grimshaw, in the Peace River Country, Township 102, Range 21, West of the 5th Meridian.

No. 3, called Utikuma, with a settlement at Big Prairie, 30 miles north-east of High Prairie, and a second settlement at Gift Lake, 47 miles north-east of High Prairie, in Townships 78 and 79, Ranges 12 and 16, West of the 5th Meridian.

No. 4, East Prairie, 25 miles south of Enilda, in Township 71, Range 15, West of the 5th Meridian.

These areas which are in the Peace River country, have good agricultural land though it is rough at Gift Lake.

There are three other areas in north-eastern Alberta:

No. 7, Beaver River, with two settlements: Kikino East, 30 miles south of Lac la Biche, and Kikino West, south of Caslan P.O. This area is suited to the production of livestock.

No. 8a, Wolf Lake, in Township 65, Range 8, West of the 4th Meridian, is a poor area north of Bonnyville. Most of the original settlers have left the area, though a number of them return to spend the winter there, doing some bush work, which is nearly finished.

No. 10. This area near the Alberta-Saskatchewan boundary, in Ranges 1 and 2, in Townships 57 and 60, has two settlements: Elizabeth, 30 miles south-east of Bonnyville, and Fishing Lake, about 30 miles east of Elk Point.

All the Metis Areas total 57 townships.

Lumbering is about done on Areas 7, 8a and 10, but some of the settlers still make a fair living in the winter by cutting and selling rails and posts.

SERVICES: Education: All the Areas have schools in which are taught Grades One to Nine. In a few of the 17 rooms operated, Correspondence Study Lessons are provided under the supervision of Study Supervisors. Assistance for higher education is provided through an educational bonus for students who can qualify for it.

Health: All the Areas are in Health Units. Nurses visit the Areas regularly. There is a resident nurse at Paddle Prairie, and a doctor under contract to serve that settlement. A Nursing Sister looks after the needs of the people at Gift Lake, Area 3.

All Metis settlers are provided hospitalization through contracts between the Metis Rehabilitation Branch and district hospitals.

Government Stores: At Paddle Prairie, Gift Lake and Kikino East, are general stores at which groceries and other supplies are sold at reasonable, competitive prices.

ESTABLISHING A HOME: Any Metis citizen who wants to live on a Metis Area should look it over, talk it over with the Local Board, and discuss the Regulations with the Area Supervisor, and the Supervisor of the Branch, if it is possible. The applicant has to be accepted first as a member of the Settlement Association on the Area where he wishes to locate. Within 90 days after he has been accepted as a member, the applicant should select a suitable quarter section of land. This should be done in the spring or early summer, with the help of the Local Board and the Area Supervisor. On their recommendation, the applicant is allotted his land by the Metis Rehabilitation Branch, and authorized to move onto it and start improving it. He is expected to build a house within 30 days after his application is approved, constructing it according to a standard plan. Some help is provided for building.

During his first year as a settler, the applicant must have a garden, prepare at least 10 acres for crop and have other improvements worth $50.00. He is assisted to get his breaking done but must do his own clearing.

When the settler has carried out the requiremtns and has paid any debt he may owe for government assistance, he may be issued a Certificate of Occupancy to show that he has done his settlement duties properly. It is his title which he may hold as long as he carries out his duties of occupation and use of the land.

A settler who fails to do his settlement duties as he should by not putting up a house, preparing a garden, putting land under cultivation and making other improvements or by being away from the settlement for a year without permission, will lose his allotment and his membership in the local Settlement Association.

ANNUAL LEVY: Each settler has to pay an annual levy of $10.00 which qualifies him for the services available. The levy may be paid in cash, delivery of wood or by work at the rate established by the Rehabilitation Branch. Only fully qualified settlers who have paid their annual levy are eligible for permits to trap or cut timber.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Labour Projects: Land clearing on government farm fields, road construction, building projects provide some work on the areas to assist the settlers to pay debts to the government, and to provide limited income to live on during short periods of need.

Timber Projects: The government promotes lumbering and other timber projects on the areas where there are commercial stands of timber.

Hunting and Trapping: Hunting is permitted in season and trapping under license issued by the Metis Rehabilitation Branch.

Fishing: At present the Metis settlers are not fishing in any of their lakes, though commercial supplies are available in limited locations. In the fall of 1957, 20,000 pounds of white fish were taken from Wolf Lake by commercial fishers.

Livestock Production: Metis settlers raise their own stock which graze at large on the areas. The government supplies registered bulls to improve the area cattle. At Paddle Prairie the government butcher shop provides a limited market for some cattle. The production of cattle, sheep and hogs could be increased on every Metis Area.

Grain Production: This is mainly of oats and barley, most of which is fed on the farms of the growers.

Assistance: Government machinery is available at a fair charge per acre for such work as cutting grain. Several areas have threshing machines, grain cleaning machinery, plows and discs. Seed grain is advances to settlers who cannot provide their own. It is a loan that may be repaid in cash, work or by returning the grain, bushel for bushel.

Transportation: Fair to good roads link all but two of the settlements with outside communites and towns. The main roads to East Prairie and Gift Lake are only fair, except when dry or frozen.

Churches: Church organizations are encouraged to take advantage of the privilege of leasing land under long-term for the construction of churches on the areas so that the settlers are assured of regular church services. The schools are available for services where there are no church buildings.

Entertainment: Several areas have community halls for dances, meeting and picture shows. The schools show educational films.

OTHER THINGS OF INTEREST

The Metis Rehabilitation Branch has a crawler tractor for road construction, making dugouts, or other earth-moving projects. Water supply at Paddle Prairie is being improved by constructing dougouts

to make the settlers independent of the Boyer River which often becomes but a succession of stagnant pools in summer. The best land for farming is on Areas No. 1, 3 West and 4.

The Local Board is a group of five men; the Area Supervisor, two elected Metis and two appointed Metis who are responsible for the interests of the Settlement Association by recommending new settlers or refusing applications, proposing useful projects, by advising and assisting in carrying out the projects and by keeping informed generally of the needs of the settlement.

AREA HEADQUARTERS

Each Metis Area headquarters is a homey spot that is the centre of all area activities. Here, within the whitewashed fences, are located the school, the teacherage or house of the Area Supervisor, garage and sheds, and on the areas so provided, the store, community hall and corrals. There are fields, too, and on several, the spired church.

A word about the fields - these form the government farm which is being developed as a source of seed for the settlers and to illustrate farm practies and management.

To the Area Headquarters the settlers bring their problems - sickness, need for work, broken machinery, advice about their farms: bring their friendship, to enjoy the social gatherings at shows, meetings or dances, or when they come just to visit, or attend church services when they are held.

It is at the headquarters that the Metis Rehabilitation Branch implements directly the services intended for the betterment of the Metis population of Alberta.

FOR THE FUTURE

There is an old, wise saying that all good growth is slow growth. To extend its program, the Metis Rehabilitation Branch to encourage such good growth purposes:

1. To improve the conditions conducive to better health by:

   (a) Extending the Nursing Services to include all areas, emphasizing preventive services.
   (b) Introducing "better housing" projects to replace unsuitable dwellings.
   (c) Encouraging personal pride in achievement.

2. (a) To develop demonstration farms.
   (b) To iullstrate better farm practices and management.
   (c) To extend livestock production.
   (d) To introduce use of legume-grass mixtures for pasture and hay.
   (e) To give instruction in livestock management and farm mechanics.

3. To establish a new settlement at Chinchage (Twp. 102, Rge. 24) on Metis Area No. 1, for new Metis settlers who desire to take advantage of the Rehabilitation program.

4. To improve roads into the more isolated areas.

5. To provide educational programs:

   (a) for young people, through junior club work, by encouraging them to attend agricultural, business, trade and nursing-aide schools, through education bonuses for those who qualify;

   (b) for adults, in farm and home management and in leadership and community administration.

Issued by the Metis Rehabilitation Branch, Department of Public Welfare, 306, Administration Building, Edmonton, Alberta, to provide information to prospective settlers, and to answer the many queries by people who are interested in the program of the Government of Alberta for the benefit of the Metis citizens.